



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Budget

SPEECH

Monday, 23 June 2014

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Van Manen, Bert, MP

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Mr VAN MANEN (Forde) (13:01): It has been interesting listening to the contributions of both the member for Fraser and the member for Rankin. It is instructive to note that, back in January this year, the respected former Labor senator John Black produced a report. This was quoted by Matthew Denholm in *The Australian* in an article titled 'Labor's policies hurt "working families"'. It opens with the comment:

THE big winners from six years of Labor government were white-collar, inner-city Greens, while the big losers were blue-collar traditional ALP voters and young mums in the outer suburbs, an analysis of job trends shows.

We have spent the last 15 minutes listening to two contributions from those Labor members opposite, who were both key members of the previous government. Yet it was their very policies over the last six years—I would respectfully suggest—that were, in part, a contributing factor to the outcomes that were quoted from that NATSEM report.

It is sad to reflect that, whenever Labor are in government, they always purport to seek to help the poorest and most needy in our society yet appear to do almost exactly the opposite. In particular, they stand there still as an obstacle to the repeal of the carbon tax, yet they fail to want to have an honest discussion about the welfare of low- and middle-income families. But we need to recognise that it is their past decisions that have gone a long way to contributing to the cost-of-living pressures felt by those people, as was well outlined in Mr Black's report. These are decisions such as an economy-wide carbon tax driving up the cost of living for families, community organisations, service groups, small business and those supporting our families; changes to private health insurance placing more pressure on public hospitals; abolition of the Chronic Disease Dental Scheme; and, for those organisations involved in helping the most needy in our community, the introduction of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

To give you on a local example, Debbie Hill from Lighthouse Care—who provide low-cost groceries for our community—was recently at a forum with the Minister for Social Services. She advised the minister that the cost of additional compliance and red tape as result of the introduction of the ACNC was some \$10,000 per annum. Considering that they sell groceries to those needy families in our community for \$25 a trolley, that is some 400 trolleys of groceries they can no longer provide. But this government stands here today seeking to repeal things like the ACNC, which will take that burden away and allow community organisations to help those who are in need.

As I touched on earlier, we have the absurdity of the carbon tax. Imagine the savings to our community organisations, charities and small businesses that will accrue through the removal of the carbon tax, the funds they will be able to put back into our local communities, funds and resources that will assist low- to middle-income families, the very families you are talking about in this motion, member for Fraser. They will continue to be disadvantaged by the stubbornness and intransigence of Labor and the Greens.

The coalition government's priority is to provide more opportunities and security for Australian families. As the member for Hughes rightly touched on in his contribution and to quote the member for North Sydney, the focus should be on equality of opportunities. That is exactly what we are seeking to do for all in our community through the introduction of the trade support loans for apprentices, through providing additional concessional loans for diploma and associate degree students for the first time and through working with the university sector to provide scholarships to those from low- and middle-income families who otherwise could not afford university education.

Debate adjourned.